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## A COUNTRY SCHOOL.

Pretty and pale and tired  
She sits in her stiff backed chair;  
While the blinding summer sun  
Shines in on her soft brown hair;  
And the little brook without,  
That she hears through the open door,  
Mocks with its murmur cool  
Hard bench and dusty floor.

It seems an endless round—  
Grammar and A. B. C.  
The blackboard and the sums,  
The stupid geography;  
When from teacher to little Jim  
Not one of them cares a straw,  
Whether "John" is in any "case,"  
Or Kansas is Omaha.

For Jimmy's bare brown feet  
Are aching to wade in the stream,  
Where the trout to his luring bait  
Shall leap, with a quick, bright gleam;  
And his teacher's blue eyes stray  
To the flowers on the bank hard by,  
Till her thoughts have followed her eyes  
With a half unconscious sigh.

Her heart outruns the clock,  
As she smoothes their faint sweet scent;  
But when her teacher's blue eyes stray  
These measures in vision meet!  
For time will waste or lag,  
Like your shadow on the grass,  
That lingers for a while in any "case,"  
Or Kansas is Omaha.

Have patience, restless Jim,  
The stream and fish will wait;  
And patience, tired blue eyes—  
Down the winding road by the gate,  
Under the willow shade,  
Stands some one with fresher frowns;  
So turn to your books again,  
And keep love for the after hours.

## AFTER MANY YEARS.

On the extreme point of the Headlands was a ragged boulder, standing, as it were, at anchor, for the salt waves beat in a circle round its base; and on its summit, swinging out with a daring recklessness that would have been appalling to timid, inland folk, a sturdy youth wearing the rude garb of a fisherman—that was Harry Melville. He broke out into a song—a rude, nautical thing; but the old time air was sweet, and the voice that sung it wondrous clear and resonant, ringing out like a trumpet peal above the dash of the waves, yet sweet and tender as the note of a wood thrush. Over and over again he thrilled the quaint ditty, until every echo caught up the strain, and the whole place and the great sea itself seemed thrilling with melody.

Just then the door of the old farmhouse swung open, letting out a broad flood of lamp light and a slender girl's figure; and an instant later this self same figure, quaint and prim in its gown of gray, stood just behind the singer. He sang on, utterly unconscious.

"Harry!"

He was near losing his balance, and his song came to a sharp and sudden end, leaving the closing night in silence. The girl broke into a merry laugh.

"Well, Syria?" he asked.

"Nothing—only supper is waiting, and Aunt Sarah is growing impatient," she replied.

"Oh, that's all!" The eager light died out of his eyes, leaving them gloomy and abstracted. "I do not want any supper; I've made up my mind, Syria."

She gave a quick, gasping breath, but face and voice were quiet.

"Well, Harry?"

"I'm going!"

"When?"

"At daybreak."

Her very lips paled, and her slender fingers shook and trembled, but her eyes remained true and steady.

"Well," she answered slowly, "God bless you, Harry!"

The boy stood silent, his eyes fixed on the far coast line, where the red sunset fires were slowly burning out. His thoughts busy with the past. One night, especially, stood out clear and vivid—a wild, stormy night, when the sky was ink, and the mad sea thundered until the old farmhouse shook to its very center. They were down on the strand, his father and a half dozen fishermen—himself, a sturdy lad, following like a young spaniel. Hard work lay before the men. A stately vessel lay out on the bar, and the strong gale was driving her to pieces.

Boat after boat started out as her booming guns begged for assistance, but each one was swamped or driven back. It was mere desperation, an old sailor said; no boat could stand such a gale—yet they could do nothing. His father chuckled to himself, and bringing out a sturdy craft of his own, placed himself at its helm, and went out into the darkness, never to return again, the men averred; but Harry did not believe it. He had never known his father to fail, and he sat down amid the crash and roar to watch and wait. And not long, for by and by the sturdy boat beat its way back, bringing only one trophy, a little sea wolf that the old man had picked up—a tiny girl child with flaxen hair and blue eyes.

The rough men bore her up to the old farmhouse, Harry trotting on behind; and before day dawn the booming guns were silent, for the stately vessel, after a brave fight, had gone down beneath the hungry waves.

Capt. Melville and his wife could do nothing more or less than to adopt the little storm gift and bring her up as their own child. So they called her Syria, after all; and as she merged into maidenhood the lads called her the "belle of the ocean."

She and Harry had been sister and brother for ten years, eating their frugal supper from the same porringer, and sharing the black dragon sails at daybreak and in her, Syria," she said, and his eyes solemn and tender and his voice tremulous.

The girl stood silent a moment; then putting the question with a forced laugh: "How far are you going, Harry?" she said. "When do you expect to come back?"

"The Black Dragon's bound around the world, I believe," he responded, "and as to coming back—well, it will be years before I see the Headlands again, I guess."

Then a sudden light blazed up in his eyes.

"Shall you miss me when I'm gone, do you think, Syria?" he asked.

A swift rose color bloomed in her fair cheeks, and her eyes overflowed with tears.

"Harry," she said, her voice sweet with unspoken tenderness, "I'm superstitious, you know. I want you to take this with you," unclasping a slender gold chain from her neck. "I always had a fancy that this little trinket possessed some hidden charm. Put it on your neck, please, and if you ever are left to the mercy of the wild waves, it will save you, may be, as it did me."

At moonrise everything was ready, and with his knapsack strapped across his shoulders, Harry stood in the doorway.

"Good-by, father!" his voice husky.

"Good-by, Harry. Make a man of yourself before you cast anchor again."

"Ay, ay, father!"

Then he broke down, and pulling his cap over his eyes strode away without another word.

One after another the seasons followed each other. The gray moss on the old farmhouse roof grew larger and thicker; the old captain was getting rheumatic and dozed away the afternoons in the chimney corner, and Aunt Sarah was losing something of her old bustling activity.

Beautiful Syria! The promise of her girlhood was being developed into glorious maturity. But she might have been a pearl, as they called her, in her icy seclusion, for all the human feeling she seemed to possess.

Every day the Black Dragon was looked for, and every evening brought a disappointment.

At last, one golden afternoon, when sunlight streamed in yellow bars over the sea, Syria had looped back the curtains with clusters of scarlet berries and sprays of wintergreen, and ranged the golden pippins in long rows on the mantle, in the very midst of their expectation the tidings came, brought from the city by a fisherman. The Black Dragon, homeward bound, took fire just under the line, and every soul on board perished. Harry would never come home!

A silence more solemn than death fell on the old farmhouse. Aunt Sarah sunk beneath the blow into feeble second childhood, and the old captain grew morose and sullen. Syria alone bore the blow bravely. Fair and white as a pearl, she moved about with sealed lips and solemn eyes, taking all the heavy household cares upon her slender shoulders and working from dawn till twilight. Then, when the hush of night brooded over the great sea, she took her sole recreation. Gliding down to the beach, she would clamber to the top of the rough boulder and sit for an hour looking out to sea, with her poor eyes full of piteous expectation.

"No," she said, "I won't forget; he'll come by and by; my little charm will bring him—I will wait!"

At last there came an afternoon black with portentous omens.

"I never see such signs as these at the Headlands only once afore, and then we had a gale that shivered things—and we are going to have it again."

The old fisherman was correct; about sunset it came, with a thundering crack and crash, as if the very heavens were being rolled together.

"The guns have ceased," he said, putting on his oilcloth coat. "The poor ship's gone. I am going down to the shore to see what the boys are doing."

"A bad night, cap'n," one of them said as he and Syria approached.

"Poor luck, captain—poor luck! We tried putting out the boats, but it was no go—the gale was too hard. We picked up only that chap, and he's done for."

Syria's eyes followed his pointing finger, and he beheld stretched upon the wet sand the figure of a man.

"He's not dead, father!" she cried.

"There's warmth here—indeed there is! Let's take him up to the house and try to save him."

"Do as she bids you," said the old man; and the men obeyed.

"Tis he—your son Harry! Don't you see? Will you waste your precious time? Let us work and save him!" she said.

And they did. By and by a faint warmth diffused itself over his body; a dim red shone in his pale cheeks, and he murmured, just above his breath:

"Syria! Syria! I am coming!"

Syria heard him, and without a word or a sigh dropped in a dead faint at his very feet.

In a few days he entirely recovered and related his adventures. He had made his fortune and was coming home to stay, and no one was more happy than Syria.

But three weeks after there was a grand wedding at the old farmhouse. Capt. Harry Melville received for his bride Syria, the founding, the beautiful "belle of the ocean," and their cup was full—Waverley Magazine.

Had Lost His Grip.

A middle aged man with a troubled look on his face stood on the corner near the Central depot and attracted the attention of a passerby who inquired:

"Can I do anything for you, sir?"

"Stranger," said the man, "I've lost my grip."

"Oh, brace up," said the other in a cheery voice, "you'll get hold again if you push in. It happens to us all some time or other."

"I'm afraid I'll never get it again," said the other, sadly.

"Nonsense, man. Don't give up now, when they've just discovered the elixir of life," advised his friend. "Take hold again like a man."

"What air you talking about?" asked the other. "I lost my grip with four new shirts in it, a new waistcoat, a pair of suspenders and my wife's photograph. Just give me a chance, and you'll see whether I'll take hold of it or not," and he walked off with a suspicious look at his late adviser.—Detroit Free Press.

A Fortunate Woman.

"There," said the new lady of the castle, "are the graves of the former owners of this house. My ancestors," she added, proudly, "are all living."—Harper's Magazine.

## WEAK EYES INCREASING.

AN OPTICIAN IN A HISTORIC BUILDING SAYS THEY ARE.

The Causes to Be Found Largely in Our Modern Sedentary Life—Why School Children Are Afflicted—The Kind of Glasses to Wear.

On the west side of Nassau street, just south of Fulton street, is an old building, the second floor of which was formerly used by Aaron Burr as a law office after his return from Europe in 1812. The floor is now used by an oculist and optician, who is a scientist, philosopher and merchant combined.

His reception room was formerly Aaron Burr's consulting room, and it is somewhat of a coincidence that whereas it was formerly used for a consultation of the mind, it is now devoted to the purpose of consultations for the sight.

"It is not generally known," remarked the oculist-optician to a News reporter, "except to perhaps a few old fashioned mechanics, that this was the office of the famous Aaron Burr; but to some of the older members of the bar this place has a historical interest as well as a personal one, so far as their eyes are concerned."

"I make no spectacles or eye glasses for the trade. Every pair of glasses made here are made after a personal examination of eyes, by myself, or upon the written prescription of a recognized oculist. It seems to me that defective vision was never so great as now."

CAUSES OF DEFECTIVE VISION.

"The peculiarities of defective vision are legion, but the prevailing affection of the eye is nearsightedness. This arises from many causes, chief among which is the increase among sedentary occupations. Jewelers, journalists, especially doctors, analysts, clerks, bookkeepers who have to work in dark warehouses, typewriters, especially women, milliners, painters upon enamel, and in fact almost every business that demands close attention for any length of time, has its proportion of nearsighted workers."

"Not one man in a hundred has absolutely perfect vision, and that one man is usually an illiterate person, whose business is an out door one. Yet even sea captains, particularly in the German navy, wear eye glasses."

"Another cause for defective vision is the present mode of living. We eat too fast and choose our food at random. The laborer and the farmer, whose frugal fare is plain but substantial, are seldom troubled with bad sights. Several mental troubles most surely affect the eyes where there is already a predisposition to sight failure."

"During the past five years there has been a noticeable increase of impaired vision among school children, caused by three things: First, too much study in badly lighted school rooms; second, 'bolting' their food instead of masticating it; third, the undue strain upon the nerve tissues, which is the result of both. A good many children of tender years often require glasses as strong as those worn by persons of advanced age."

"Others are born with a malformation of the cornea, or front part of the eye, the curvature of which being unequal, the rays of light do not harmonize. Such people see vertical lines clearly, but the horizontal lines indistinctly, or vice versa. The only remedy for this sort of thing is to use cylindrical glasses."

"Again, others are troubled with weakness in one of the muscles of the eye, so that the eyes do not move alike. Hence they may have double visual impressions and see two objects instead of one."

"There is one peculiarity, however, about near sighted people which does not apply to other visual disorders. Their sight improves when they get to be about 40 or 45 years of age, and continues to improve for a few years afterward. This improvement, however, is only confined to persons who use glasses of the requisite strength. A too strong eye glass is worse than none at all, and while dealing with this part of the subject I may say right here that the general tendency of nearsighted people is at first to wear glasses that are too strong for them. Many a person's sight has been ruined in consequence."

A FEW SIMPLE RULES.

"The knowledge of a few plain, simple rules about eye glasses would save a world of trouble to the uninitiated. Always buy spectacles in preference to eye glasses. They are not only more comfortable, but their use avoids the often unnatural presence of common frames upon the muscles of the nose. Never wear rimless glasses, but use them with frames, the reason being that the sight of the eyes is not injured by the refraction of the rays of light on the edges. Use pebbles in preference to glass, because pebbles are ten degrees cooler. Never buy cheap glasses until your eyes have first been examined, because very much depends upon the condition of the body when a person comes in to buy."

"It requires from twenty minutes to three-quarters of an hour to enable the oculist to properly test a person's eyes in order to get the right kind of glass to suit him. Dozens of persons come to me overworked and laboring under some degree of excitement. Their eyes are naturally affected by this condition, and they need to cool off and become composed before I can attend to them. The graduation in the number of the glass under these circumstances will vary from one-half to a whole number in the strength of the glass. Never buy off peddlers, because they have not the facilities to suit you."

"Affection is one of the most prolific sources of defective vision. Young people want to wear glasses because they look stylish, when in reality there is nothing the matter with them. In such cases I simply tell them so, but when they insist, a piece of clear, common glass is the best, even though that is undesirable."—New York News.

Peter Laing, who is 104 years of age, has recently been admitted to church membership in Elgin, Scotland.

## Cannon Ball Capers.

Capt. Meredith, John Ritchie and George Shields, known as "old horses" and "old timers," sat around in the Press club one afternoon recently and talked about the times of the war and told of the funny capers that cannon balls and musket balls cut.

Capt. Meredith said he once found a dead Confederate behind a tree. The dead man was resting on one knee, in a position to shoot. His musket was in his hands, the butt of the gun was against his shoulder, and one eye was open, squinting along the gun barrel. There wasn't a mark on the body, but the man was stone dead. There was a ten pound cannon ball buried in the tree. The man had been killed by the concussion.

Mr. Shields said that he saw a cannon ball go into the ground about 200 yards in front of where he was standing. He thought that was the end of the matter, but in about three seconds the ball came out of the ground fifty yards beyond the place it struck. It then in its flight struck a stump, carried off, broke a soldier's leg, and, rolling on a few yards further, upset a camp kettle and scalded a man's hands.

John Ritchie said he saw a man hit with a "spent" cannon ball. He walked over to where the man lay to see what he could do for him—give him a drink out of his canteen, or a chew of tobacco, or something—but all that was visible was a mass of about 100 pounds of flesh and blue cloth, mixed up like sausage, with an eye and two teeth sticking out on top.

Capt. Meredith said that, speaking of cannon balls, one of the most novel sights he witnessed during the war was a cannon ball about as big as a four barrel going through a horse lengthwise—that is, lengthwise of the horse. There was left of the horse his head, its four feet and the lower six inches of its tail.

When it reached this stage I saw that there was a disposition to break down the ropes and let everybody take a hand in the lying, so I got away before I was crippled.—Chicago Mail.

Trapping Mosquitoes.

Three or four men were sitting on the piazza of a seaside cottage smoking. It was evening. The stars were as thick in the sky as freckles on a red headed girl's face. The waves came in on the beach with a swish-swash-swish just as they have done ever since the second day of the creation.

More musing than the song of the waves were the notes, and more multitudinous than the stars of heaven the number of the mosquitoes that haunted that piazza, and every one of them was "looking for blood." The men had ceased smoking for fun. They now puffed their pipes and cigars to keep the mosquitoes away.

"Something funny about mosquitoes," said one rather absent minded.

"Yes, rather," was the drawing reply. "Funny how much blood it takes to fill one of them up."

"No, but honest, now; do you know that if a mosquito 'd get his bill down into your hand he can't pull it out while you hold your breath?"

"Don't believe it."

"It is true, however, for I have tried it."

"Bet you the cigars a mosquito can take his bill out at any time he wants to, and we will try it right here. Is it a go?"

"It is, and I'll let them try." A lamp was lighted, the cigars put out and all waited. In less than a minute a mosquito had placed himself on Tom's hand and begun operations.

"Now," said Tom, and placed the forefinger of his other hand down close to the mosquito. It did not budge. He placed his nail against the abdomen of the insect and whisked it around. Still it remained fixed.

"You can do it every time," said Tom, as he killed the mosquito and drew a long breath.

It is a fact. Go and try it.—Boston Globe.

Belling the Rat.

Dr. McCrosswell is troubled with rats—that is to say, rats infest his drug store. Every now and then he will find a large rat in the trap. The other day an unusually large one was caught. It was not killed, for the doctor is too tender hearted to kill anything. Mr. Rat was chloroformed, and while asleep a tiny silver bell attached to a piece of silk was placed round the rat's neck. After painting the day and date of capture on the rat's back restorative were used, and the rodent was soon in a condition to walk about the cage trap. The merry tinkle of the bell produced a queer sensation on the rat. It's a fact, the countenance of the rat assumed a livid hue and it became so nervous that its teeth chattered. Then the rat was freed, and darting in its hole disappeared. What effect the tinkling of the bell had on the other rats can better be imagined than described, but all the rats have left the drug store.—Washington Capital.

A Cat Commits Suicide.

A tabby cat belonging to the family of David B. Paul, Wallingford, is reported to have committed suicide while grieving over the loss of her family of five kittens that had been drowned in order to keep down the cat population. When the old cat missed her offspring she went tearing over the house, showing her great distress by loud meowing. Failing to find the kittens after a long search, she went up to the third story and deliberately jumped out on the porch roof below. When picked up old tabby was dead, her neck being broken in the fall.—Philadelphia Press.

A Mutual Death.

Saysit Anyhow—How did you ever come to marry Miss B?

Grinnard Barrett, (Frankly)—I married her for her money, she said she'd be worth a million on her wedding day—estimated me at the figure, you know.

Saysit Anyhow—Why, she deceived you shamefully!

Grinnard Barrett—Well, I was deceived, that's a fact, but Great Scott! man, just think how she got left!—Epoch.

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